THIRD RAIL

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This issue is dedicated to ***Victor S. Williamson***

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The Clark Ashton Smith story "The Ninth Skeleton" adapted with permission of the C.A. Smith Estate.

FOREWORD

Welcome to the magazine that's been 13 years in the making, "on and off", so to speak.

Where / when / why did it begin?

I guess it all started with ***Castle of Frankenstein*** *magazine.*

Remember ***COF****, with publisher Calvin Beck's "stream of consciousness headitorials", Bhob Stewart's columns B.H.M. (Before* ***Heavy Metal****), the fanzine reviews, etc., etc.? Back in 'nem days (minus Betty Lou, "Coke and fries", and busting the shocks on the old man's Ford at the local mosquito-infested drive-in movie) there were no such things as* ***Cover-up Lowdown, Two-Fisted Zombies****, et al. Y'see, kids, all we had was "The Magazine of Psychotomimetic Monsters!"*

'Nuff Said, to cop a corny cliché.

Well, not exactly; we had a bit more: the first Lancer ***Conans*** *by* ***Frazetta****, Archie Goodwin's* ***Creepy****, Jim Morrison's* ***Light My Fire****. . .*

Seize the Time!

One thing led to another, as things invariably do. In ***Castle*** *#11, there was an eye-grabbin 2-page advertisement for the first issue of Wally Wood's* ***witzend****. Properly spelled with a small "w".*

The heart froze within its cavity! WOOD! WILLIAMSON! CRANDALL! FRAZETTA! And it cost a buck! Ghod, it was hard enough to rustle up 35 cents for ***Blazing Combat*** *in those days. . . when you could find it! And now, they wanted a* ***buck*** *out of my hide!*

What to do?

What one usually resorts to: look up a rich relative!

Luckily, I had one: a cousin about my age, "hooked" on all of the same "stuff". But with one BIG difference: he had it ALL. ***Famous Monsters, Horror Monsters, Mad Monsters****, monster masks, plastic monster models. . . you name it, he had it. I mean, he had* ***Mars Attacks*** *cards comin' out of his ass!*

And. . . a dresser-drawer full of fanzines!

Spa Fon! Squa Tront! Graphic Showcase! Amra! *God knows What Else. . . and, of course,* ***witzend****! Y'see, kids, back in 'nem days, we didn't have PCP, LSD. . . or even 280-Z.*

Pot was on the stove, Coke came in a bottle. . . and all we had was: ***fanzines!***

'Twas the ultimate homemade confection! No greedy publishers who gobbled up all your copyrights, no mob distributors taking 50% off the top, no "comics code" (substitute any pet authoritarian institution of your own choosing) castrating your creativity! Just whistle up your own art and story, take it to a local printer for a thousand or copies (or, better yet: run it off on a mimeo in your ***basement****), and sell it via direct mail. Neat. Uncomplicated. Efficient. Why. . . it's almost sinful!*

Yet, as we all know. . . nothing could be more American!

So, then, we would do a fanzine.

LIFE got in the way, though, as it invariably always does.

The high school days gave way to more and more of the meaningless miscellaneous trash we all somehow became immersed in. Dreams of being a comic artist were relegated to just Friday nights. Just few precious hours, then, to pour over the week's releases, catch up on a new Creepy or some new fanzine, whip out those Willi ***Flash Gordons*** *to learn how to do* ***backgrounds*** *(best goddam giant ferns and polka-dotted mushrooms you ever saw, right?!!) and generally sweat and wheeze over an ill-lit drawing table to fight the instruments, such as: exacto-knives that couldn't cut zip-a-tone and rapidographs that always clogged (goddam double-zeroes!). And always, late night pizza and a Bela Lugosi movie that lasted to* ***at least*** *2:30 a.m.*

High school gave way to college and. . . you guessed it!. . . even MORE irrelevant trash. Gave up on the calculus and physics. . . switched to art. Hell, when your brain keeps working out formulae even while you sleep, then its time you looked for something else, Bunky! Besides, it was easier. . . and more fun. . . just to study Frazetta! Moral support came from an ***E.C.*** *nut and owner of the third-largest Bradbury collection in the whole world. Mel Laird killed the draft and I graduated, pondering curious questions like "How come Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta never went to Viet Nam?!?"*

Earning a living got in the way of publishing a fanzine for the next few years. Sentenced to the lumpen proletariat, I did my time. Several bright spots along the way made things easier. Self-paroled from the depths of Metropolis, I journeyed to Kubert School, this generation's sole answer to the legendary Hogarth school of bygone days. And from there, a brief stint with Steranko, the first guy who thought enough of my writing to pay me for it.

And so, we come to the Now! It's happening so fast, this Onrush to World's End (1988?), that I'm somehow Out-of-Phase. "My fanzine" somehow finally happened without me. It's done, Yeates, you hear? It's finally done. Hope you like it, you pestering son-of-a-bitch.

As for the rest of you, pick what you like. . . and remember to keep one-half of your brain firmly planted in Tomorrow. It's safer than eating polka-dotted mushrooms.

Citizen Ken

"And so, The Hero, Faithful Woman at his side, strode bravely into the New Decade, with sword in his hand and courage in his heart, great victories behind him, great challenges before him..."
The Krenkel Chronicles Dec. 1980
WILLIAMSON
CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE!

All artwork Copyright © 1981 by Al Williamson

TY: What was it like when you first came up from Bogota, Columbia and hit the Big City as a young artist?

AW: I was very disappointed! Nobody cared for the (comic) stuff. They didn't collect it; they hadn't seen the Flash Gordon serials; they had **no feelings** for the stuff. Now, Krenkel was the first guy I met who dug the old Raymond and Foster material, who collected the stuff the way I did. He's the guy that introduced me to all the illustrators. I was just 17 or 18 when we first met...

TY: How did you first meet him?

AW: It was at the Hogarth school where he had been taking classes and later was a teacher there...

KF: Roy was a **teacher** at Hogarth school?

AW: Yeah, but also a student. It was in September of 1948 that he had brought in some Tarzan pages to show the class how Foster had worked. And THAT attracted me immediately! ZING! He and I became great friends after that!

KF: The thing is: Krenkel is responsible for influencing a whole lot of people...

AW: Oh yeah! He's definitely responsible for my knowledge of all the great illustrators of old. If it hadn't been for Roy, I wouldn't know who J.C. Coll was or Matania or Norman Lindsay or any of those guys! Jeff Jones... well, he was the kind of guy who would discover things on his own. But again, Krenkel was a catalyst there. Wrightson... Frazetta... he turned Frank on to the Old Masters. Frazetta didn't know who these guys were. So actually, Roy really is — what did you call him the other day? — "the spiritual godfather to us all!"

KF: I used that line on him the first time I bumped into him. It was at one of the art rooms at one of the conventions. Wrightson and Kaluta and whoever else had set up their stuff in the art room and Roy was walking out. I said that to him as he passed and he immediately shot back with "Boy! I don't know! That sounds like a lot 'o crap t'me!"

AW: (laughter)

KF: There was that moth-eaten sweater and those famous red sneakers...

TY: I remember asking him "Why don't you do interviews? I've never read an interview of yours." And Roy said, "Oh hell, I don't have any sexy stories! I never ran off with a girl like all those other guys! There's nothin' interestin' about me! Oh hell!"

AW: (laughter) He's a very sincere person. I've never caught him in a lie. He's very honest, loyal, trustworthy. A fine individual of the first rank.

KF: He seems to have gotten through life by the seat of his pants. It seems kind of a shame in a way.

TY: Yeah, but maybe it would've spoiled him to "go commercial". How can you "commercialize" somebody like that?

AW: He's a REAL artist. A FINE artist.

KF: How did you and Archie Goodwin first get together as a writer-artist team?

AW: It was back in the late '50's. I've known Archie since '56. He was going to Hogarth school along with Larry Ivie. In fact, Larry got in touch with me that September.

TY: Didn't you go to school with Torres and all those guys?

AW: No, I went back in '45 to Hogarth school.

KF: It was called "Cartoonists and Illustrators"... and it's SVA (School of Visual Arts) now. It had just started after the war, right?

AW: Yes, primarily it was just a sketch class in the beginning. It wasn't a genuine bona fide "school" until Hogarth had hooked up with the G.I. Bill thing.

TY: It wasn't a daily thing?

AW: No, not until '47.

KF: Do you think that's the way it should be if you're going to have structured schooling at all?

AW: I think it all depends on the individual. I suppose it's great to be able to go to an art school 5 days a week. Then again, a person might just want to stick with one thing; it's hard to say. I couldn't regiment myself. I was bad for that sort of thing in school... even art school. I had only just started Hogarth school and after a few weeks I just dropped out!

TY: You didn't like the teachers telling you what to draw?

AW: No! It had nothing to do with that! I just didn't FEEL like GOING!

TY: Aha, a true dropout!

AW: It was in the evenings and I would much rather stay home and goof off! And the trip! I'd start thinking: "Oh God, here it is 5 o'clock, I gotta be there at 6... Oh Lord, I gotta walk over and get the goddam bus and go across town... Oh, the hell with it! I'm stayin' HOME!"

TY: (Raucous laughter and applause!)

KF: (laughing) So then, it was Ivie who introduced you to Archie. Incidentally, where's Ivie coming from? It seemed that he arrived kind of on the tail end of E.C.'s death throes...

AW: Yes, well, they all came to Hogarth school. That was the big attraction. Anyway, Larry called that time and asked if I would want to see his collection... he was into comics and Flash Gordon and all that. So I went over and he seemed to be a likeable chap. And that's where I met Archie.

TY: Archie seems younger for some reason — too young. Like, he should be older...!

AW: Well, he was 18, so figure it out... I think he finally hit 40 somewhere along the line...!

KF: When did he make the decision to just write?

AW: Well, I think he kind of got into it by default. He is an excellent cartoonist and he could make a good living from it if he had to. And I wouldn't say that I got him into the writing part, but, to the best of my memory, they were looking for writers and artists over at Harvey Publications. Larry wrote some stories and so did Archie while Reed (Crandall) and I handled the art.

TY: "The Hermit" and some underwater thing...?

KF: Weren't they those things for *Alarming Adventures?*

AW: I don't know what they were for because they weren't published right after we did them. We did a lot of stuff for Harvey and the material never came out.

TY: It must've been 5 or 6 years later before they saw the light of day...

AW: Anyway, I got to know Archie and sometime later Leonard Starr was looking for someone to help him with *On Stage,* so I suggested Archie.

TY: What year did you start working for John Prentice...?

AW: 1960... It was March of 1960.

TY: Right in there somewhere, I guess a couple of years before, you did a lot of stuff for Charlton. Did Archie write any of those?

AW: No, he didn't. Archie had started for Starr... and then he was drafted!

TY: Oh, no...!

AW: I think he was doing something for *Redbook* at that time, too. He was an editor of some sort. So, he was drafted and I was in Mexico.

KF: Did you work down there?

AW: Yes, I was working for John Prentice as an assistant. The reason that I was called in to help him out was that John had decided to go to Mexico and Mac (Al McWilliams), John's prior assistant, didn't want to go. Mac had his own strip and his own work besides working for John. At the time, Larry Ivie had taken my work up to Prentice's studio, and I guess Larry suggested me. Now I didn't know that, but later, I got a call from John and was offered the job.

TY: Did you like his style?

AW: Oh, I was impressed with John's work a great deal. Anyway, it worked out. He was very patient with me. After about 4-5 months, I started doing stuff for him. And the deal was: would I be willing to go down to Mexico?... and I said "Si!"...

KF: You knew the language and he didn't, so I'll bet you were more of a help than someone else might have been...

AW: Well, you really don't need any Spanish down there, but it helps a lot! In the beginning, King wanted 12 weeks ahead, so...

TY: So, you sent stuff back up to the States as you finished it...

AW: Yeah... and we turned it out pretty well. I worked very hard.

TY: What did you do, actually, when you worked for him? Everything?

AW: Well, I layed it out. Everything went down on tracing paper...

TY: Tight pencils?

AW: I actually inked those layouts! And then I would trace 'em... very nice, clean and tight... and then he would use my inks for ideas. As I look back, it seems to me that I worked harder than he did!

TY: Did you grow out of *Rip Kirby* or just stop working for Prentice?

AW: Well... there was no work to be had. It's the old story. I was lucky to get the job. Jack Kirby had it all sewn up so far as comics went. There was very little work to be had. Anyway, I took the *Rip Kirby* thing and little by little graduated to one complete finished strip, minus heads. John inked those.

KF: So, you did "headless horsemen" for awhile!

AW: Yeah, but then I started getting calls to do other stuff.

TY: You were doing Gold Key stuff too at the time, right?

AW: Yeah... *Twilight Zone* and *Believe It Or Not*... and then I was ghosting *Big Ben Bolt* for awhile as well. I had a lot of work. I had **tons** of work.

KF: And then *Creepy* came along.

AW: Yeah... some joker connected with Warren was let loose... he was the one who got us together to do it...

KF: Wasn't *Creepy* originally Ivie's idea?

AW: Originally, it was, yes. It was stolen and somehow Larry was eased out for some reason... he wrote a batch of stories...

KF: Wait a minute! He was working for Calvin Beck at the time. Perhaps that had something to do with it since Warren was publishing *Famous Monsters*.

AW: No, it was "dirty dealings" with somebody else who shall remain nameless.

TY: This "middle-man" person...

AW: Yes. Anyway, what happened was that he was the kind of a guy who charms the hell out of you, tells you what you want to hear. And when it came time to get this thing (*Creepy*) together, he couldn't follow through. Through me, he got Frank (Frazetta) and all the other artists that did the work, because nobody was going to do it unless I did. And I got Archie in there to write the stories and this "nameless person" sort of lost his marbles. He did something and was out. In any case, Archie was made the editor because he was doing all the work and Warren realized this. I had quit the magazine immediately after I had found out about this other joker.

KF: Was he written into "The Success Story"? (from *Creepy #1*)

AW: No, but you might say that that **could** be that "nameless gentleman"... and I shouldn't even be using the word "gentleman". But, anyway, Archie became the editor of *Creepy* and, when he did, he had to clean up the whole mess that the other guy had left behind. He had to find out who was paid, who was not paid, who did what...

KF: Did people lose artwork on that deal?

AW: I think so. Poor Archie had to mend fences.

KF: So, in other words, it was on Archie's shoulders to have to go to all these artists and say "trust me... I know you've been screwed once, but now I'm asking you to have faith in me."

AW: Exactly, Archie is one of the most trustworthy people in the world.

KF: And he really got that magazine together...

AW: And the funny thing was that when they hired him back a few years ago to be an editor, he was eased out again in the sense that he was going to be the assistant. Well now, hell, that's like hiring Hal Foster to do *Prince Valiant*, firing him, hiring somebody else and then hiring Hal back again to be the new guy's assistant! Now what the hell is that?!

TY: He would've run circles around whoever was there at the time...

KF: He had already proven before that he could do it by himself...

AW: Yeah, I don't think it's fair. Look, every artist has something to say... from the "best" of the lot to the "worst". Every artist in the business, given the chance, will turn out something nice. Y'know, one time I was deathly afraid of losing my job (with Prentice). I realized that there were others who could do the "civilian" stuff in *Rip Kirby* much better and quicker than I could. And then, one day I got very sick...asthma...the works.

KF: It sounds psychosomatic...

AW: All these people that I was afraid would take my job came in and **took** my job. But then I said to myself, "OK, it's done. Forget it. I'm glad they took my job. Let's see what happens **now!**" Bang! I got well... and started working again. Got my job right back. You don't have to be afraid. You don't have to be jealous. You don't have to worry about someone else. Just do your job to the best of your abilities, take your responsibilities, meet your deadlines and that's all that matters. That's **it**. That's it right there. Because you are YOU and nobody else... and what YOU do they can't take away from you. It's yours.

KF: Touching on another aspect of that: isn't there a lot of backroom politics that go on? For instance, if they don't want to use a guy so often, or at all, they just ease him out of the work to be had?

AW: Not with artists. I'm talking about artists, not businessmen.

TY: Artists working for other artists...

AW: Personally, I understand that in Europe there's a lot of that: cutting the other fellow off. The work is very hard to get. Here, I don't know. I have never, to the best of my knowledge, found anybody cutting somebody else off for work. It could happen. It may have happened...

KF: I already know of several instances where it has!

AW: Could be... I think that when comics first started there was a lot of that cutthroat stuff.

KF: Well, when you broke in, it was a different situation: there were dozens of different publishers in the early 50's... and now there are only 6! So, isn't it conceivable that there'd be a lot of dirty dealing going on that you'd never hear about?

AW: Yeah, but since there are so few publishers of comics, why isn't the work better?

KF: Why isn't the work better? You mean the product? Publishers discourage talented people from working for them. They just abuse them so over the years that, finally, the artists get their fill of it and split. To say nothing of the eternal problem of low rates...

AW: I would seem to me that the fewer the companies, the better their choice of the better artists...

TY: The best artists don't want to work in regular comics anymore. Look at guys like Wrightson, Steranko...

AW: They love comics, but they don't want to do it...

KF: I think it's "Creative Control" that's the key issue at hand.

TY: Joe (Kubert) doesn't draw comics anymore.

AW: Do you think he ever will?

TY: Joe's got to get the right offer and the right situation where he's going to do what he wants to do and he's going to make the money he wants to make from it... providing he's got time for it.

AW: I feel very sad to see comics doing so badly...

TY: You hate to say "I draw comics..."

AW: Well, it's kind of a bad time for me to come back to comics in a sense because there doesn't seem to be any pride left...

TY: There's pride in some of the graphic novels, the peripheral stuff, some of the *Heavy Metal* material, some foreign things...

AW: And some of **that** is so **atrocious!**

TY: That's why I said "SOME...!"

AW: Jesus! What garbage! (slight laughter) "no restrictions..." means showing people's guts being torn out or explicit sex scenes...

KF: Don't you think it's even worse with the syndicates, though? Neal Adams once remarked that, for an artist such as yourself, syndicates are a waste of time. Now that you've written your epitaph to *Agent Corrigan,* how do you feel about it? And how valid is Adams' statement with regard to yourself?

AW: I don't know, I just do my job and go with the flow, wait and see what happens. I like comic books, but I don't like what they're doing with them.

TY: Wouldn't yours *(The Empire Strikes Back)* stand out?

AW: Well, I have no idea. I don't know if it would mean anything. The first *Star Wars* books — and this is not putting Howie Chaykin down — had a charm, but were pretty atrocious. The layouts were good but the finish was terrible. And yet, it sold.

KF: It sold because it was *Star Wars*...

AW: And it proves a point. You don't **have** to do good stuff. They got together and did that thing — I don't know how long it took or how much time they had — and they just whipped right through it. It could have been so much better!

KF: Then, part of what it comes down to is: who are you doing it for?

AW: I suppose every artist draws for himself. Back in the old E.C. days, in a sense, we were all going for one another. And I was going for Wally Wood.

TY: Was that because you were the most impressed with his style?

AW: Well, there are some people that can tell you: "Gee, your work is great", and really mean it. Wally is one of those people. He tells me that he likes what I did... and I'll really take that as a compliment. Angelo Torres is another guy. Very seldom does he give a compliment. Very seldom...

KF: He's just not into commenting...

AW: I take his words seriously. And if guys like that say those things, then maybe I'm on to something.

KF: Hey! Sunspots this year! Angelo speaks!

TY: (laughing) If you're going to get paid for it, then you might as well do it for yourself. What you're saying is that you're trying to figure out what counts now. You made the comment before about the Chaykin job and that it sold. You're trying to figure out why.

AW: Well, first of all, *Star Wars* was a big deal... but **still:** what you could cut it down to is that, had those books been well-drawn, it would've meant something like...

TY: "Hey, comics aren't so bad after all..."

AW: It's kind of depressing to know that **really** they don't give a damn if you give 'em a good job or not.

KY: They'll print it to fill up a book...

AW: That's right. Unfortunately, they'll take it.

KF: I hate to keep changing the subject, going back to the syndicated strips... but it's like they don't seem to care if you're Hal Foster or if you're somebody else...

AW: Well, neither do the comics, frankly. I think that the only reason good artists have gotten the work is that they can be had for the same price as the bad artists. But even then, they don't give a damn. The only reason E.C. turned out good work — and I don't think it was all THAT good — was because Bill (Gaines) was rich enough and the company was small enough that they could **amuse** themselves doing comics. It was **fun** for them! They happened to be making money at it. The SF books didn't sell. It was the horror books...

KF: ...that carried the whole line.

AW: Exactly.

TY: What was it like up at King?

AW: Nobody's happy up there. Nobody cares. The only guys that like the work are a couple of guys in the bullpen. Last summer ('79), I was just bashing out *X-9*, I was so... depressed...

TY: Dissatisfied?

AW: Dissatisfied, yeah. Here I was busting my hump and the damn strip wasn't making any money. And they don't **work** at selling the strip! They really don't. They give me all kinds of reasons I can't fight, but I know goddamn well they could do better at selling that strip. And they don't care. I walked in and they handed me a bunch of proofs of all the strips, the funny stuff, etc. And there was a week's worth of some of the worst stuff I had ever done... did it with my foot... my eyes were closed...

KF: (laughter)

AW: ...and I looked at it, and I hadn't even **signed** it...!

TY: Well, that's not dissatisfied...

AW: I looked at it, and then I looked at the other adventure strips there, guys getting **very** good money... and they're using the same old tracings they were using 10 years ago. The same goddamn things **I** had used 10 years ago! So, I looked again at the other strips and then I looked at my strip: mostly heads, a couple of figures here and there... I had even taken a photograph **special** for this thing. I took a little **pride**, even though I was bashing it out, and I didn't sign it. And then I realized, "Hey man, somethin's WRONG here!"

TY: Your stuff was still better than theirs...

AW: Yeah! And there you go. I was so dissatisfied. I was doing probably the lowest-paying strip they'd ever had!

TY: And the other artists... well...

AW: I know they're tired. They're just making their money — $600 to $800 a week — and they're happy. And that proves my point: "Give 'em shit! They don't care as long as it sells!"

TY: Yeah.

AW: Why does one strip sell and not the other? Because they don't push it! And I can't understand it because King Features owns *Secret Agent X-9*. You'd think they'd WANT it to make money for them! They don't care. It makes a certain amount of money for them and they're happy with that. Screw the artists, screw the writers! They're not going to dip into their half. They take half and, out of **my** half, they pay the writer, the engravers and so forth. So I'm not really getting 50%, because they take it out of my half!

KF: So that comes to...

AW: Yeah! They'd sooner lose that 50% they're making whole than give me a raise. Business doesn't work that way...

TY: Businessmen...

AW: Friggin' businessmen... and I gave them the name of a guy to do it. George Evans will now be doing the strip. But he's also going to write it, see, so he'll be making more money, getting what Archie would get.

TY: So, he'll get a little bit more of that 50%...

KF: Yet, essentially it's the same ballgame...

AW: Yeah, they're still going to make their money! They don't give a hoot that I'm not doing it! They're saying, "Hah! We lost Williamson, but we're **still** going to make our money 'cause he gave us George Evans!" Now, I didn't give 'em George, I suggested George. But they didn't even know who to get! If I hadn't said George Evans or Al McWilliams, they'd still be hunting... 'cause they don't know who's who!

TY: Like, totally unaware of the art end of things.

AW; I'm kind of glad that if it's going to be continued, it's going to be done by a friend of mine.

TY: Sure, even thought there are some bad things about King...

AW: Well, I like King, don't misunderstand me. I'm just a little ticked off at 'em. But I still like 'em.

TY: You still like the character a lot.

AW: Oh, I liked *X-9*, very much...

TY: You loved doing it...

AW: Sure, I think I disagree with Neal. I think I was made for strips. I'm much better as a newspaper strip artist than as a comic book artist.

TY: Possibly, he hasn't seen a lot of *X-9*...

AW: Nobody has! Only two people see it! Archie Goodwin and Al Williamson!

KF: Neal, I think, at the time had in mind the comics format, big double-page spreads and so forth, where you don't have the physical limitations of 3 panels a day.

AW: Well, you can make a strip interesting, too. It's a challenge.

TY: You do one panel all the way aross sometimes.

AW: Sure.

TY: Would you be into doing Sunday pages?

AW: Not the way they're done today. They print 'em so badly. They leave you no room to draw. They cut off the first tier anyway. What the hell is **that?**

KF: Yes, but in comics you **have** the room to draw!

AW: You have the room to draw, but you're limited: by bad printing, bad lettering, etc.

KF: Do you see yourself moving into other formats, the kind that have grown and become popular in the last few years, such as the $7.95 or $8.95 over-sized softcover?

AW: Do you mean stuff I would do from here on in?

KF: Yes, could you possibly see yourself doing any of that since you don't like the limitations of four-color comics, their printing, etc.?

AW: Yeah, I'd like to get a piece of the action. At this point, everybody's doing it.

KF: A graphic novel, perhaps? Something that goes on for 50-60 pages uninterrupted? Something with a $5 or $6 price tag?

AW: I don't know if the things are selling, are they?

TY: Some are, some aren't.

KF: Morrow's book supposedly sold out.

AW: Well, yeah, but now that was because of the writer (Zelazny). Now, this is no putdown on Gray 'cause he's a hell of a good artist. But what was it — the artist or the writer that sold it? Now, how about this stuff that Chaykin has done, which is excellent...

KF: I really don't know... I imagine Corben's stuff would sell...

TY: The first Chaykin did not do too well, I believe...

AW: Well, there you go...

TY: *Heavy Metal* issued a whole bunch of books. The first Moebius book they did sold out immediately. They printed it a second time... sold very few. They ran "Conquering Armies" and a couple of others, and they didn't sell. They're all in the bargain basement bins now.

KF: I think what you're dealing with is an over-saturated market. There's just so many people you're going to reach with that stuff and that's **it**.

AW: Well, you would think that the guy that picked up the Gray Morrow book, first of all, is an SF buff, right? Why wouldn't he buy the first Howie Chaykin book? What's the difference? The other one is just as good in its own right. Why wouldn't he pick that one?

KF: It becomes market research at that point, a responsibility of the publisher to break down his market and see who the hell he's selling to.

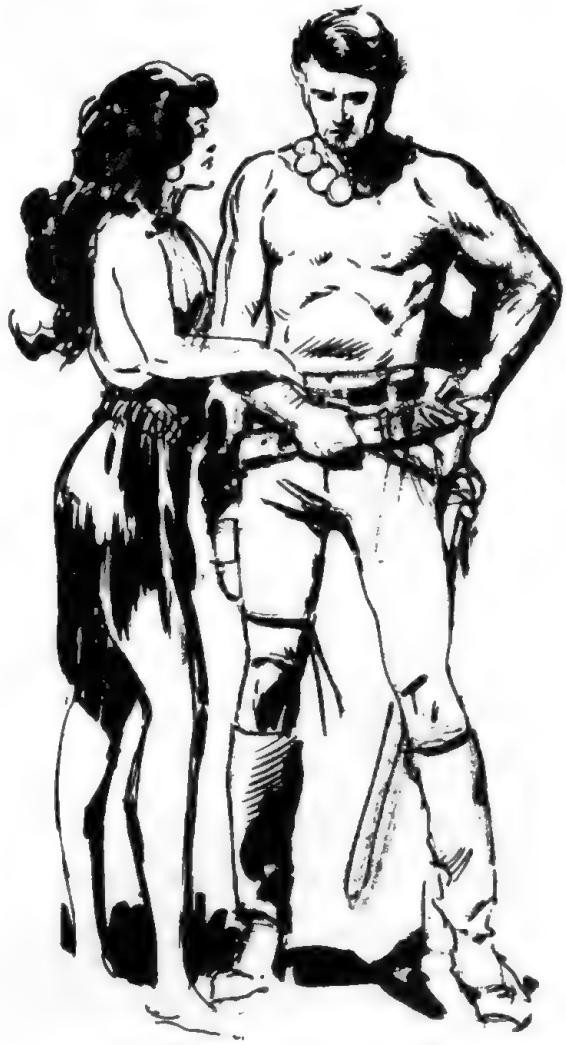
TY: Wasn't the Morrow book basically the first book of its kind to hit the marketplace? It was the first one I remember being in all the local bookstores. You didn't have to order it from Bud Plant or someone else — it was right there.

KF: The Doubleday SF Book Club sold a pile of 'em too.

TY: Just because it was so different, perhaps that's what put it over saleswise and made it a success.

AW: Maybe the "novelty" is wearing off.

TY: That's terrible... to think that it would only last that long.



AW: Well, comics should be done as comics, I think. Sure, it's nice to go hardcover. But let's face it: comics are a read-once item that ends up lining your garbage pail. Getting back to strips: I think *X-9* could sell very well right now 'cause there's nothing like it being done. All the goddamn papers are running "Icky", "Mickey", and "Shitty" and that's **it!**

KF: Would you go back to it after *The Empire Strikes Back* if it were offered to you along with the right deal?

AW: Of course, why not?

KF: You'd have no objections to the inherent restrictions...?

AW: I have no trouble with that. Strips and comics are two different things, and I think I've been able to do both.

KF: Well, that's a pretty fair assessment!

AW: I think I can tell a good strip story. Layouts are my strength, that's why I was good with John Prentice. All I had to worry about was the layout. Well, I mean finished tight pencils, not stick-figures, good storytelling, **well-drawn** figures. It's all there; the guy doesn't have to redraw anything.

KF: What do you think about what Wally Wood tried to do: just produce things for his select market?

AW: Well, if he could make a go of it, God yes!!

TY: Do you mean the *Friends of Odkin?*

AW: Well, how's it going? Is he doing alright?

KF: He got more than 1000 people initially to kick into it, published his book *Wizard King* and, I assume, made something from the secondary rights when Seuling did the color softcover version. But then, come next year's renewal, only 10% of the original crowd showed up and, once again, he was forced to close up shop. It seems like that's what he's always tried to do. It started with *witzend*. He's been trying to go independent, on and off, for the past 12 years.

AW: Well, Wally's trouble is he's not a businessman. He's really a pushover — a sweetheart. Now **there's** a really unsung hero in this business: Wally Wood. He's the best goddamn artist in the business!

TY: What an amazing storyteller...

AW: The best comic artist in the business... **the best.** You can't touch him. He's better than Eisner, better than Kurtzman, better than all these guys...

KF: I think that where others used to merely **talk** about "creative control" and "rights to their own work", he went out and DID something about it.

AW: The guy's got so much talent, it's sinful! (laughter) For me, I look back now: I've been in the business 30 years and I've seen 'em all. I've seen the guys who plug along and struggle... and all along Wally Wood's been way ahead of them. And he still is. And it'll be proven, in the years to come, that Wally Wood was one of the greatest comic artists in the business.

TY: He's so entertaining...

AW: He writes well, he draws well... that's it: Entertainment! That's what everybody's forgotten! Nobody want to entertain anymore!

TY: I just picked up an old *Thunder Agents* and I was **rolling** with it!

AW: ...Because a **real** comic artist was doing it!

TY: It was the greatest! And it wasn't even his most flowery work. It was super-heroes, and I don't even **like** super-heroes...

AW: I don't like 'em either...!

TY: ...and the stuff was fantastic!

AW: ...the way comics should be! Fun stuff!

KF: What do you think of *Cannon?*

AW: Oh, I love it! *Cannon* and *Sally Forth* are two of the finest strips ever done. Now there you go — you've got a guy with a free hand... all the violence you want... all the sex you want... and he DID it! And he made it ENTERTAINING! And that's better than all the shit done in *Heavy Metal!*

(Raucous laughter and applause)

AW: And *Sally Forth!* It's so much **fun** to read! That's the proof of the pudding: he's got an adventure strip and a humor strip... and they're BOTH great!

TY: He can make the adventure stuff funny and the funny stuff adventurous!

AW: That's right! He's always inspired me ever since I saw his work.

TY: I kind of shy away from saying somebody's work is better than someone else's ...

AW: I know... I don't think that either. Everyone's got something to say. Eisner's definitely got something to say. So does Harvey. But why is it? 30 years I've been lookin' at this stuff... 40 years... and Wally still does it for me. Wally's got it the way Roy Crane had it...

KF: Withstanding the test of time...

AW: Exactly! All the greats are better now. You take *Prince Valiant,* written back in the 30's, 40's, and 50's, it stands out better today than ever before. It's beautifully written. The drawing is incredibly beautiful! Gorgeous! Nobody can do it like that anymore. Those guys were artists! They were people who really knew what the hell they were doing! They were true artists — not like what you see today: prima donnas... goddamn "artists" think they've created some new "illusion" or something. Hell, it was done years ago by some obscure Frenchman...

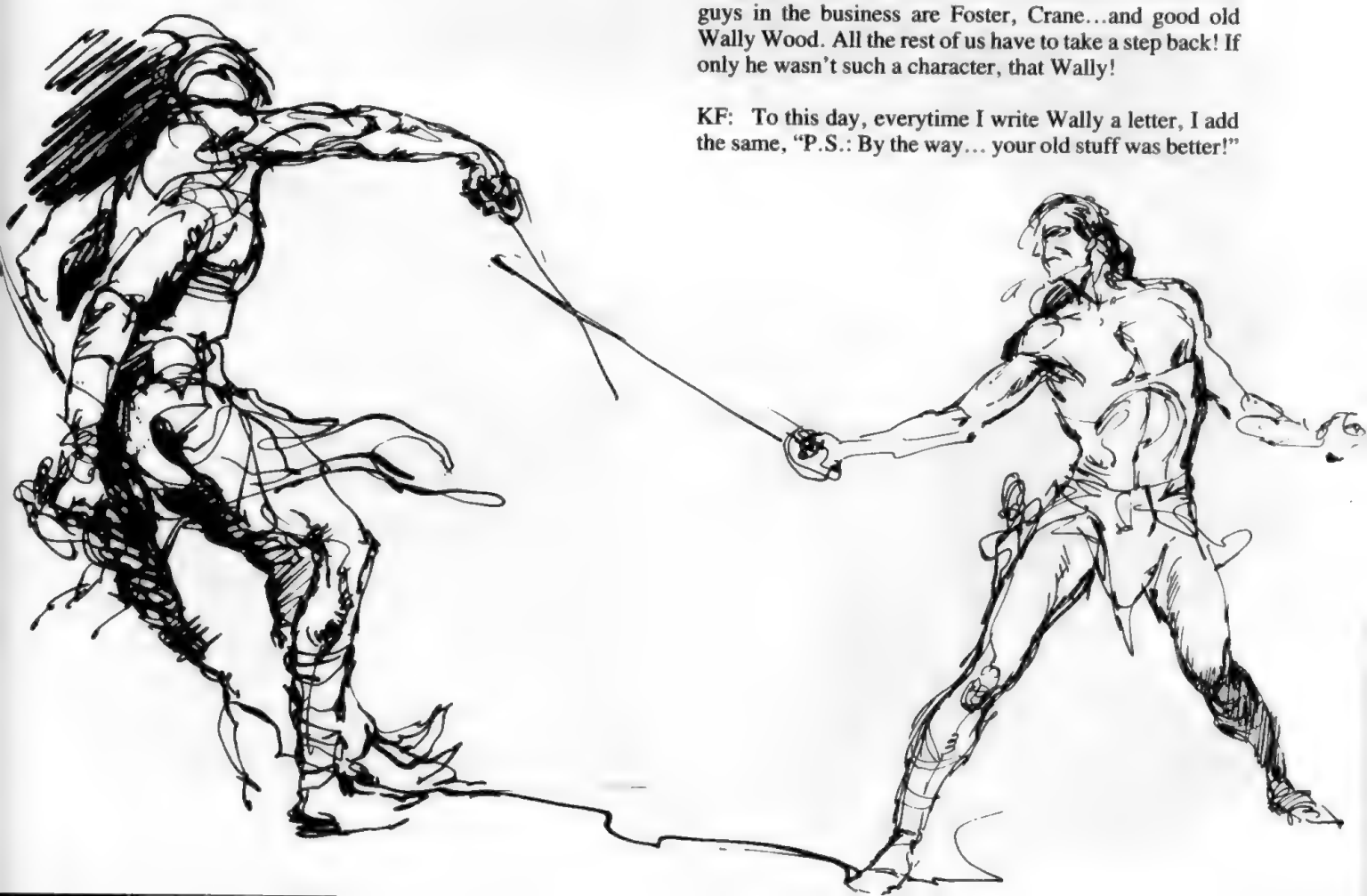
TY: ...who did it better!

AW: Yeah! Everytime I thought I had come up with something that I thought no one else had done... goddamnit! I'd find that Crane or Foster had **already** done it!

TY: (laughter) ...Oh well...!

AW: I didn't feel too bad; I was in good company! (laughs) Well, we've come to the conclusion that the best guys in the business are Foster, Crane...and good old Wally Wood. All the rest of us have to take a step back! If only he wasn't such a character, that Wally!

KF: To this day, everytime I write Wally a letter, I add the same, "P.S.: By the way... your old stuff was better!"



AW: Yeah! (laughing) I keep getting that same routine!

KF: Aha! Then YOU'VE been getting my fan mail too!

AW: Stuff like: "Gee, you **old** stuff was **really** great!" (laughs)

KF: What kind of feedback do you get nowadays?

AW: I don't know... I have a feeling that they (the fans) think I'm an old man with a long grey beard.

TY: That's because nobody sees you or your work!

KF: It'll be interesting to see what develops, now that your *Empire* has kicked off the new decade.

AW: I was afraid to give up the *(X-9)* strip for a long time, but once I asserted myself up at King Features and told them what I wanted, I felt very good about the whole thing. When the *Flash Gordon* movie adaptation came up, I told King Features what I wanted: so much dough **and** my originals back. My first *Flash Gordon* book was ripped off up at King Features.

KF &
TY: (Silent shock at this stultifying revelation!)

AW: I busted my hump on that damn thing and it was ripped off. Some sonofabitch has got it somewhere, if they haven't burned it or something...

KF: Not bloody likely!

AW: I only got paid $35 a page to do that stuff! I didn't do it for the money! And that's what a businessman can't understand. He thinks you're stupid for doing it for the sake of doing it. They don't understand the mind of an artist!

TY: Yeah, but don't forget: he's got to rise at 6:30 a.m., take the train into the city, get ulcers...

AW: Spare me!

TY: I think it's better to do what you like than to make a lot of money. I'm much happier drawing and being poor.

AW: Anyway, the *Flash Gordon* book will not get done unless I get my originals back. I was hearing "Oh, we might not be able to get your originals back!" And I replied, "Oh? Well, then, I might not be doing *Flash Gordon* in that case! G'bye, g'bye!" I don't take that anymore. I've had it up to here! (Al waves hand above his head) Now, what's the policy up at Marvel?

TY: I think the writer gets some pages.

AW: Listen, if I get a script from Marvel and it isn't one from Archie and this sonofabitch wants his "writing"... he's going to have to kill me for it!

KF: Somebody did that! Craig Russell had to split something with the writer at one time. And he didn't like the way they had pasted the balloons over his artwork. They covered crucial artwork and whatnot. What he had to do was laboriously scrape off, with bloodied fingernails, all the opaque and pasted-up balloons...

AW: Geez...!

KF: And so, he gathered up all the paper scraps and balloons and captions, stuck 'em all in an envelope and sent it back with a notice: "Here's your writing!„

AW: That-a-boy! (laughs) Anyway, I'll see. If this *Empire* thing takes off and Marvel likes it and wants me to continue a spin-off series, I'll do it.

TY: How did you first meet Lucas about the *Star Wars* deal?

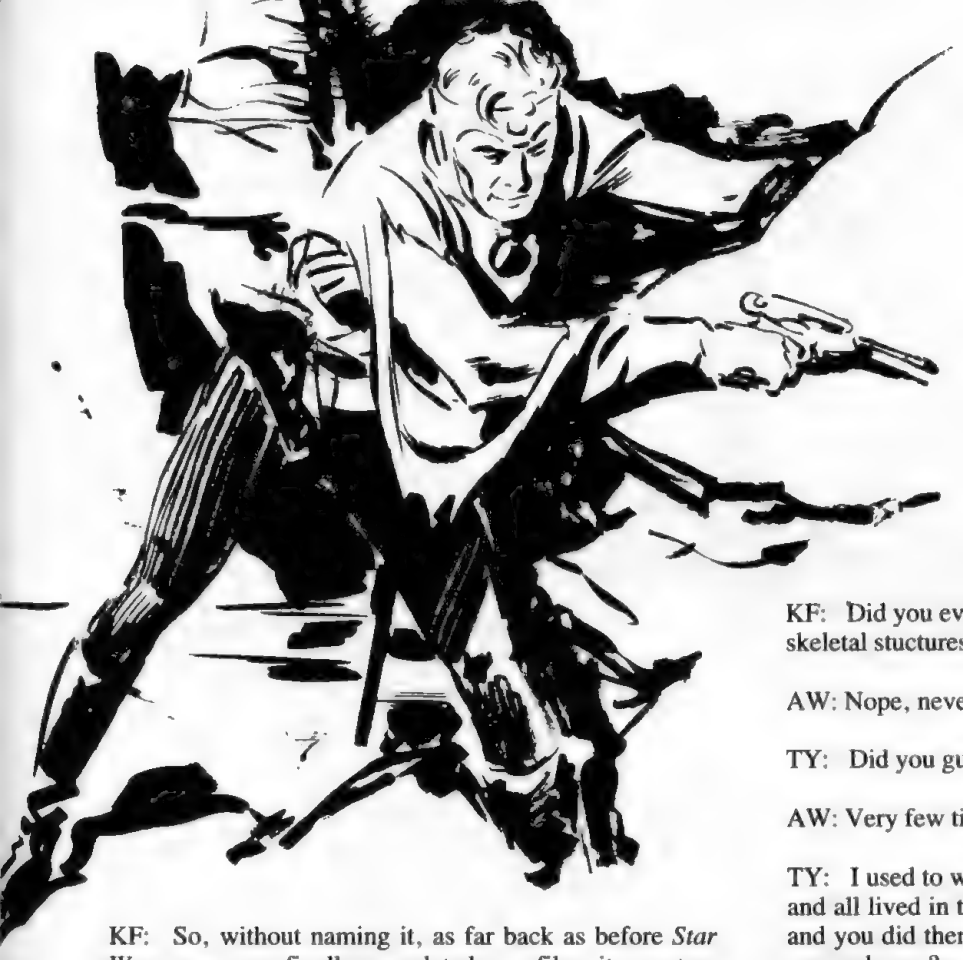
AW: I never met Lucas. Charles Lippincott gave me a call and asked me if I'd be interested in doing it.

KF: Now, this is with regard to the *Star Wars* strip?

AW: As I understand it, originally they wanted me to do the comic book.

KF: The first one?

AW: Yes, in fact, Ed Summer phoned me years ago and said that the guy who had done *American Graffiti* was thinking of doing a Flash Gordon-type film, and would I be interested in doing the comic version.



KF: So, without naming it, as far back as before *Star Wars* was even finally completed as a film, its creators had you in mind!

AW: Yeah, evidently.

KF: What was the snafu on the original syndicated version?

AW: I told 'em I'd do it for a certain price and they said fine. I did 2 weeks worth. *X-9* was doing fairly good and I thought "why should I give up that for something that might be a hassle?" King Features never hassled me on *X-9*. I didn't know what it would be like to work with these new people. I thought about it and decided to stick with *X-9* at the time. I was very unsteady; I wasn't sure what I wanted to do. I wasn't ready for the "jump to hyperspace!"

KF: You seemed to have had a lot of leeway with *X-9;* I see that you managed to work in a lot of dinosaurs and prehistoric beasts now and then. How far back does the interest in "Things Prehistoric" go?

AW: Well, I remember the old second rate movie houses where they'd let you in for something like 15 cents... I remember Kong... and whenever Rex came on and did that bit with the hand scratching itself... whoa! The whole audience just roared! We loved it! But we were all buffs and we loved the stuff! Boy, wouldn't it be great if there were one of those still frozen in the ice up north with the Siberian mastodons! I remember the first time I way dying to go to the Museum of Natural History back in '44... 'cause that was the only place where they had the bones...!

KF: Did you ever bring a sketch pad to do studies of the skeletal stuctures?

AW: Nope, never did.

TY: Did you guys spend much time there?

AW: Very few times, actually.

TY: I used to wonder how come you, Frazetta, Krenkel and all lived in the city and yet got to drawing jungles... and you did them so well. When did you ever get to see any real ones?

AW: Well, when I was a kid I lived in South America. Was always trying to catch lizards. They were all over the place and they were fascinating. And the city of Bogota is built up on a plateau... just like the Lost World!

KF: I'll bet Professor Challenger is still up there...!

AW: And the edge... a sheer drop! Looked just like a Charles Knight restoration! There you go...Charles Knight! And Zdenek Burian! I remember the first time I came across Zdenek Burian back in '56. It was very hard to get good contemporary art. You could get good books but you'd have to hunt through the second-hand book shops for 'em.

KF: Did you used to haunt the second-hand bookstores?

AW: Not as much as Roy. I was a lucky collector. I'd walk in and there the stuff would be. Fourth Avenue used to have tons of stuff. I'm sorry I didn't haunt the book shops more than I did. I didn't have the patience for it, really.

KF: So, if you didn't have something, you'd give Roy a call... and he'd reply, "Oh yeah, filed right here between 'M' and 'N'...!"

AW: Well, heh... he's not THAT together...! (laughter)

KF: Well, there are stories about Krenkel... you just don't know what to believe...a lot of it is just "fandom lore".

AW: Ah, yes...! "Fandom Lore"...!

KF: Speaking of which... tell us the Story Behind the Story called "The Homecoming"! *(Creepy #112)*

AW: Bruce Jones wrote me a 9-pager... but I felt it was a little too sexy. I didn't feel like having these pages around my kids, y'know?

TY: But you didn't mind doing it.

AW: Well, I **did** mind, 'cause it really isn't my thing. Wally Wood would've done a really good job with it...

KF: *Sally Forth's Homecoming!*

AW: I started the first 3 pages before I had sent the script back. And then I called Archie and told him what had happened. And Archie said, "Gee, what have you done? Could you make use of it? If I wrote a story to it, would you finish it?" So, I said, "yeah, I guess so, Sure! Why not?" So, I explained to him over the phone, what I had...

KF: ...And he wrote a story to match your panel descriptions! Over the phone! Without even seeing the art!

TY: No doubt, just one more example of Archie's unique abilities!

KF: Corben once said that when you decide to concentrate and commit yourself to one thing, like a career as an artist, invariably other things get left behind. You miss out on certain things in life, and when you try to go back and do them, it just never works out. What are some of the things you missed out on?

AW: I have never, ever, let my work interfere with my personal life. It's as simple as that.

KF: So... you've had your cake... and have eaten it, too...

AW: I'm a very lucky man! Some things I thought I'd never end up doing I did. I'm not a true artist in that respect: I do not forsake all for my art.

TY: But there was a time when you did quite a bit of work in very little time.

AW: Well, right, there have been those times. You do what you have to do to meet your deadlines.

TY: I had in mind one specific instance concerning you and Torres!

AW: Well, actually, we did it twice. Angie and I sat down and did 20 to 24 pages of artwork all in one night. We sat down at 8 o'clock and finished at 8 o'clock the next morning!

TY: *Cheyenne Kid,* wasn't it?

AW: *Cheyenne Kid* and a filler and then, one other time, a bunch of stories, short 4 and 5 pagers, all in one fell swoop. We had the scripts on *Cheyenne* for 2 weeks... but it was the summertime and we went to the beach a lot...!

TY: (laughter)

AW: Dick Giordano was coming in on a Wednesday to pick the job up, his usual day to come in to the city. So, Tuesday night I said to Angie, "Well, I guess we better do it!"

TY: (laughter)

AW: We happened to check the *TV Guide* and there was a show on that we wanted to watch... a John Payne western. Had a great fight in it! We watched it, and then, sufficiently inspired, we went to work! (laughter)

TY: (laughing) Still watches the tube even though he's got a deadline!

AW: This was during the "fabulous 50's". Of course, we were shot the next day. But we got it! We got it done!

TY: It probably didn't look half-bad.

AW: In fact, Stan Lee took a look at it once and said, "Why don't you do stuff like that for us?"

KF &
TY: (laughter)

KF: I've got a question about your 50's work. How come you always seemed to get 4 and 5 pagers while publishers' nephews and people like that ended up with the 8 and 9 pagers? Did you prefer the shorter stories?

AW: I just did what they gave me.

KF: Did companies like ACG and ATLAS try to stereotype you, based on the work you had done previously? Primarily, SF?

AW: Well, they tried to give me just plain "civilian" stuff and I didn't get involved with that...

TY: Except for westerns...!

AW: Yeah, well, westerns were easy. Bluejeans and boots! You can't go wrong with that!

KF: (laughter) As R.G.K. would say, "A typical Williamson syndrome!"

TY: Do you like to go to the conventions and hunt up the bargains tucked away in various nooks and crannies?

AW: Well, I USED to go to conventions. What got me disenchanted was I used to do little drawings for everybody...

KF: And then, later on, you'd find them published in fanzines...!

AW: Yeah, and then the fans would be selling 'em back and forth. In Europe, if you're asked by someone for an original drawing, you **know** that, 99 times out of 100, it's going to **stay** hanging on that guy's wall. Because an artist is considered an **artist,** even though one might "only be" a comic artist. I've always done drawings there, whenever asked, and they're always grateful. If you can't do it, okay, you can't. But I try to do as many drawings as I can. It's a big difference over there, at least, I feel that to be the case. These people are not fans. They're not into comics; they don't collect the stuff. But having an original piece of artwork signed to them by an artist, no matter who he is, is a prestige thing. Art is revered there. The only time an artist is respected in **this** country is if he makes a million dollars! Al Capp and all those guys... even Norman Rockwell! He was IT! But, who knows of Harold von Schmitt? Howard Pyle?...

KF: Well, there's a whole museum down in Brandywine, PA that perpetuates Pyle and his associates!

AW: Frank Godwin... who the hell knows who he is? Nobody!

TY: Schoonover...

AW: Yeah, him too... there's a whole slew of them.

TY: Regarding your work technique: you pencil a little bit then ink a little bit, then pencil, then ink...

AW: Yeah, well, it breaks the monotony, you know? I don't have one set way of working. I work at what I feel like doing at the time. That's my problem: I'm a great beginner... but I hate to finish up. For some reason, I just get tired of it or something. I hate doing splashes and I hate doing covers. I don't know why. But, under pressure, I do whatever I have to do.

TY: Spoken like a true professional! (laughs) Well, what else is there? What's important? Ken, where's your little list of questions?

AW: Well, don't mind me; I'm enjoying this conversation. I keep saying I'm TIRED...(laughs)... but don't let THAT stop you!

KF: ...more booze...

TY: (laughs) With 2 more bottles to go, Ken's gonna drink your Xmas present!

KF: Oh...it's his Xmas present?!

AW: Well, for chrissakes...!

TY: Sort of a donation to the gala festivities...!

AW: Yeah, but it's all GONE now, you guys!

TY: Well, there's 2 more bottles.

AW: There is? Well, thank you, Tom!

TY: Well, there **was...!**

KF: ...Urp!...

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SHRRRIPK
CHOMP
SHKSSSSSSSSSSS
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SCRAPS
©1980 SRBISSETTE

TWITCH TWITCH TWITCH
KK
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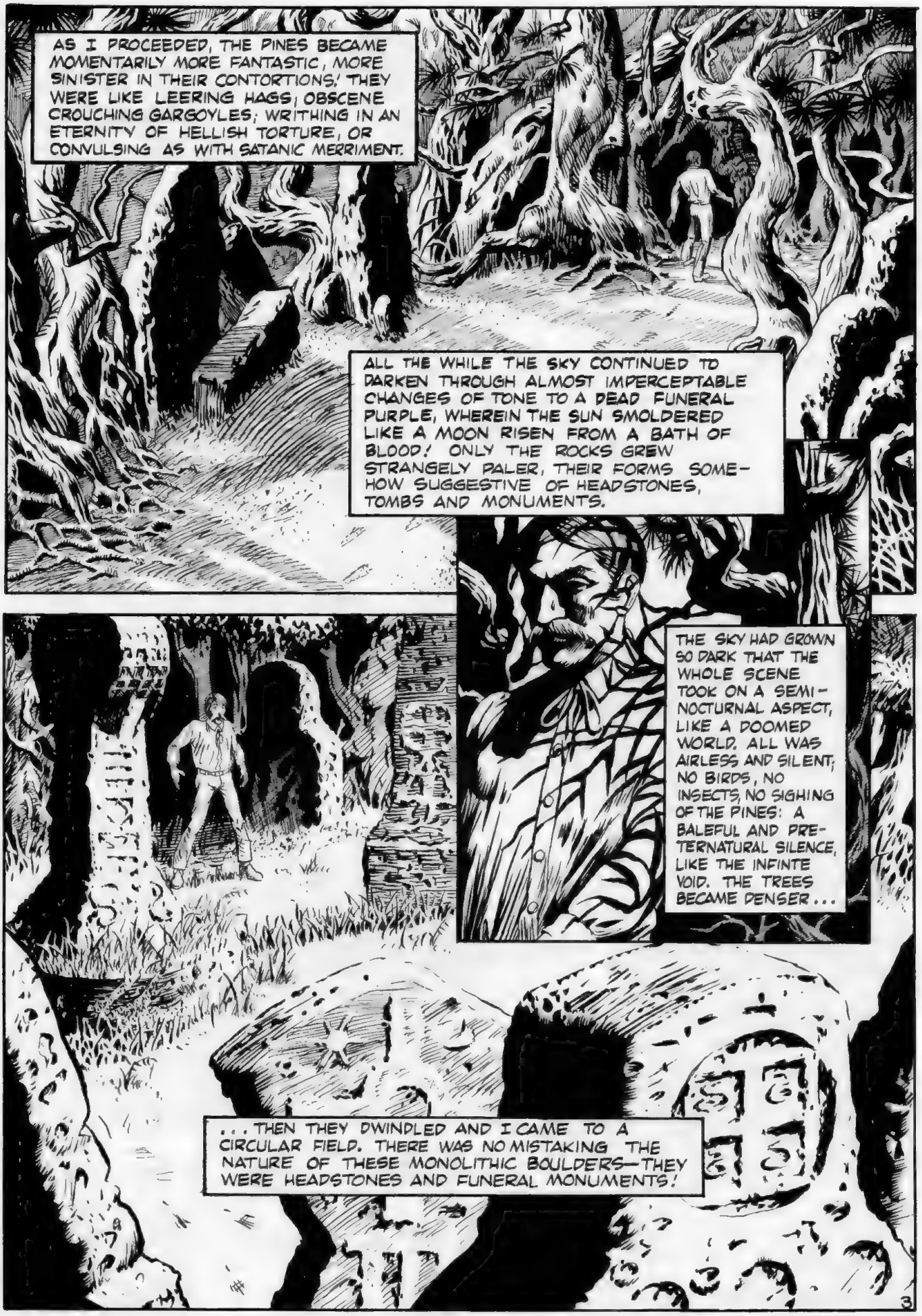
AS I PROCEEDED, THE PINES BECAME MOMENTARILY MORE FANTASTIC, MORE SINISTER IN THEIR CONTORTIONS. THEY WERE LIKE LEERING HAGS; OBSCENE CROUCHING GARGOYLES; WRITHING IN AN ETERNITY OF HELLISH TORTURE, OR CONVULSING AS WITH SATANIC MERRIMENT.
ALL THE WHILE THE SKY CONTINUED TO DARKEN THROUGH ALMOST IMPERCEPTABLE CHANGES OF TONE TO A DEAD FUNERAL PURPLE, WHEREIN THE SUN SMOLDERED LIKE A MOON RISEN FROM A BATH OF BLOOD! ONLY THE ROCKS GREW STRANGELY PALER, THEIR FORMS SOMEHOW SUGGESTIVE OF HEADSTONES, TOMBS AND MONUMENTS.
THE SKY HAD GROWN SO DARK THAT THE WHOLE SCENE TOOK ON A SEMI-NOCTURNAL ASPECT, LIKE A DOOMED WORLD. ALL WAS AIRLESS AND SILENT; NO BIRDS, NO INSECTS, NO SIGHING OF THE PINES: A BALEFUL AND PRETERNATURAL SILENCE, LIKE THE INFINTE VOID. THE TREES BECAME DENSER...
...THEN THEY DWINDLED AND I CAME TO A CIRCULAR FIELD. THERE WAS NO MISTAKING THE NATURE OF THESE MONOLITHIC BOULDERS—THEY WERE HEADSTONES AND FUNERAL MONUMENTS!

SO ENORMOUSLY ANCIENT WERE THE LETTERINGS OR FIGURES UPON THEM THAT THEY WERE WELL-NIGH EFFACED; AND THE FEW CHARACTERS THAT I COULD DISTINGUISH WERE NOT OF ANY KNOWN LANGUAGE. ABOUT THEM THERE WAS THE HOARINESS, MYSTERY AND TERROR OF INCOMPUTABLE ELD.
THE AWFUL SENSE OF ANTIQUITY THAT THESE STONES AND PINES ALL SERVED TO CONVEY INCREASED THE OPPRESSION OF MY BEWILDERMENT. NOR WAS I REASSURED BY THE SAME FOOTPRINTS WHICH SEEMED TO DEPART FROM AND RETURN TO THE VICINITY OF EACH STONE.
NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME, I HEARD A SOUND OTHER THAN THAT OF MY OWN FOOTFALLS. A FAINT AND EVIL RATTLING STARTED A HORDE OF ABOMINABLE FANCIES TROOPING THROUGH MY DEMORALIZED MIND!
THE REALITY I WAS NOW TO CONFRONT WAS NO LESS MONSTROUS! A HUMAN SKELETON BEARING IN ITS ARMS THE SKELETON OF AN INFANT!
INTENT AS ON SOME ULTERIOR CRYPTIC PURPOSE, IT GLIDED BY WITH A CERTAIN AND HORRIBLE FEMININE GRACE!
WITH THIS TRANQUIL PACE, IT PASSED THE MONUMENTS WITHOUT PAUSING...
...AND VANISHED IN THE PINES ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF THE FIELD!
4

NO SOONER HAD IT GONE, THAN A SECOND APPEARED AND PASSED BEFORE ME IN THE SAME DIRECTION AND WITH THE SAME LOATHSOME GRACE.
A HORROR THAT WAS MORE THAN HORROR, A FEAR THAT WAS BEYOND FEAR, PETRIFIED ALL MY FACULTIES! BEFORE ME, SKELETON AFTER SKELETON, EACH PRECISELY LIKE THE LAST, EMERGED FROM THE SHADOW OF THE ANCIENT PINES AND FOLLOWED WHERE THE FIRST HAD DISAPPEARED.
ONE BY ONE THEY CAME, TILL I COUNTED EIGHT! NOW I KNEW THE ORIGIN OF THE BAZARRE FOOTPRINTS THAT HAD DISTURBED ME.
WHEN THE EIGHTH HAD PASSED, MY EYES WERE DRAWN AS BY SOME IRRESISTIBLE IMPULSION TO ONE OF THE NEARER HEADSTONES, BESIDE WHICH I WAS AMAZED TO SEE A FRESHLY OPENED GRAVE GAPING DARKLY IN THE SOFT SOIL.
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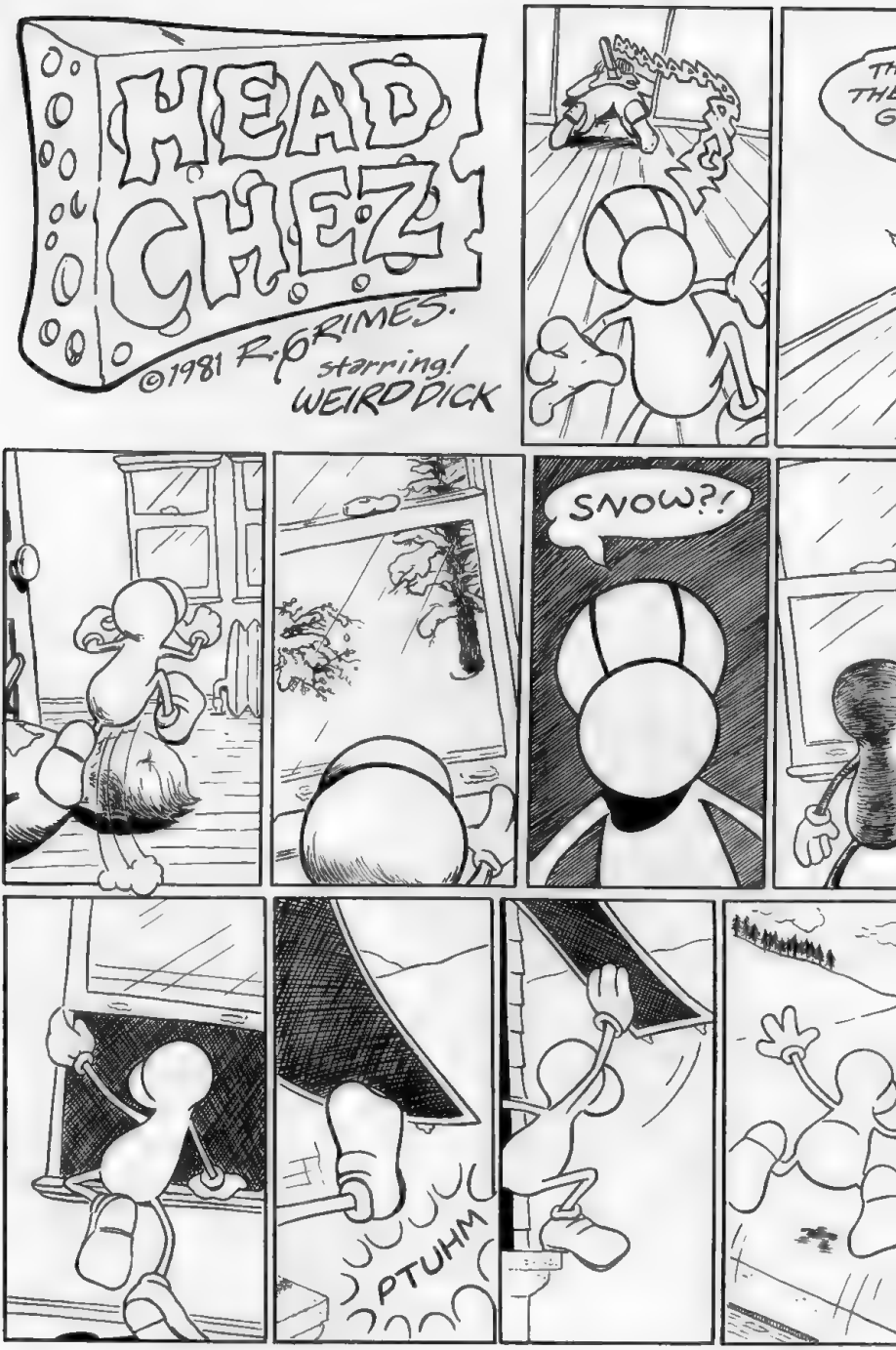
HEAD CHEEZ
©1981 R.CRIMES.
starring!
WEIRD DICK
SNOW?!
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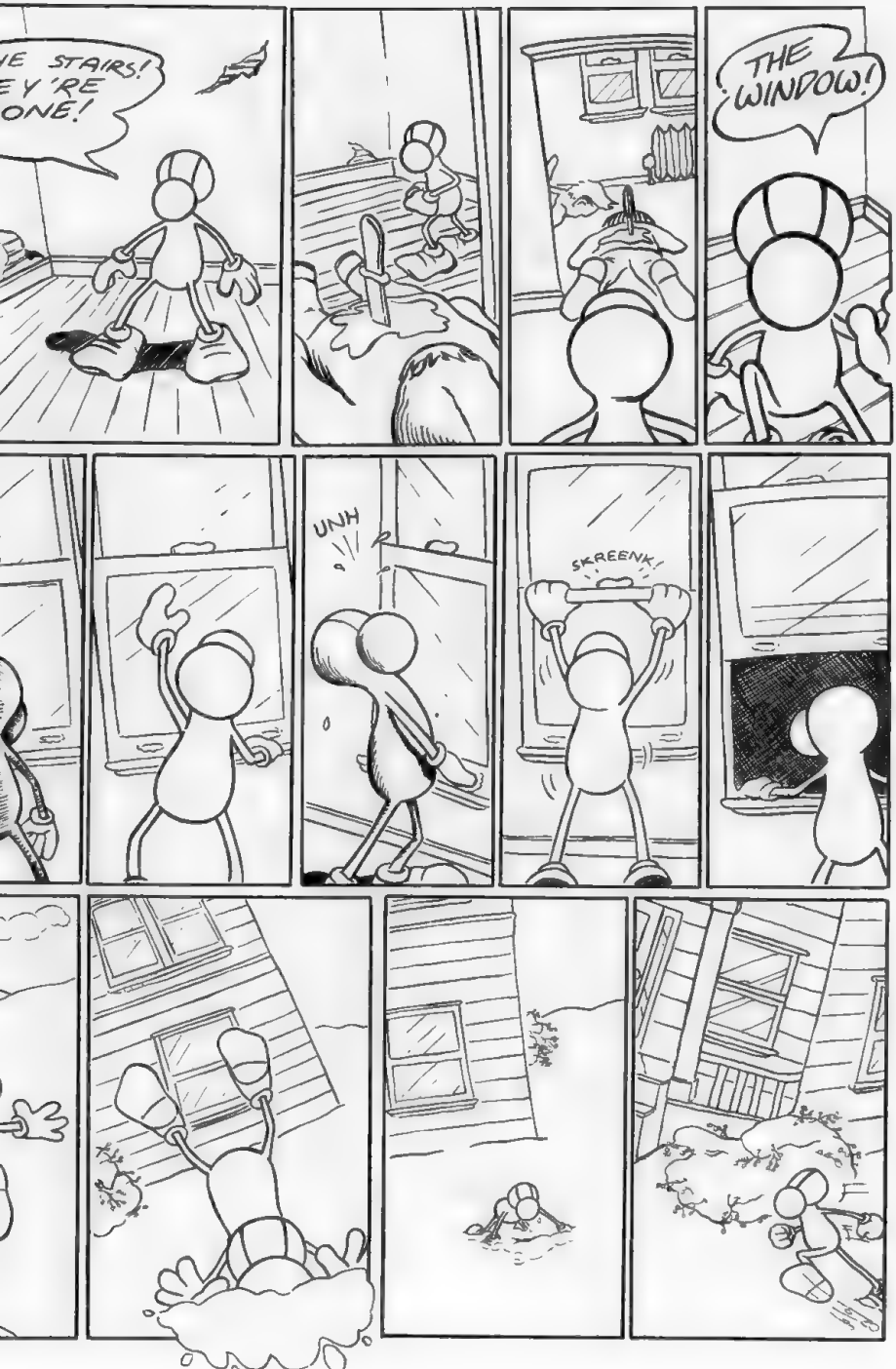
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IT DIDN'T WORK
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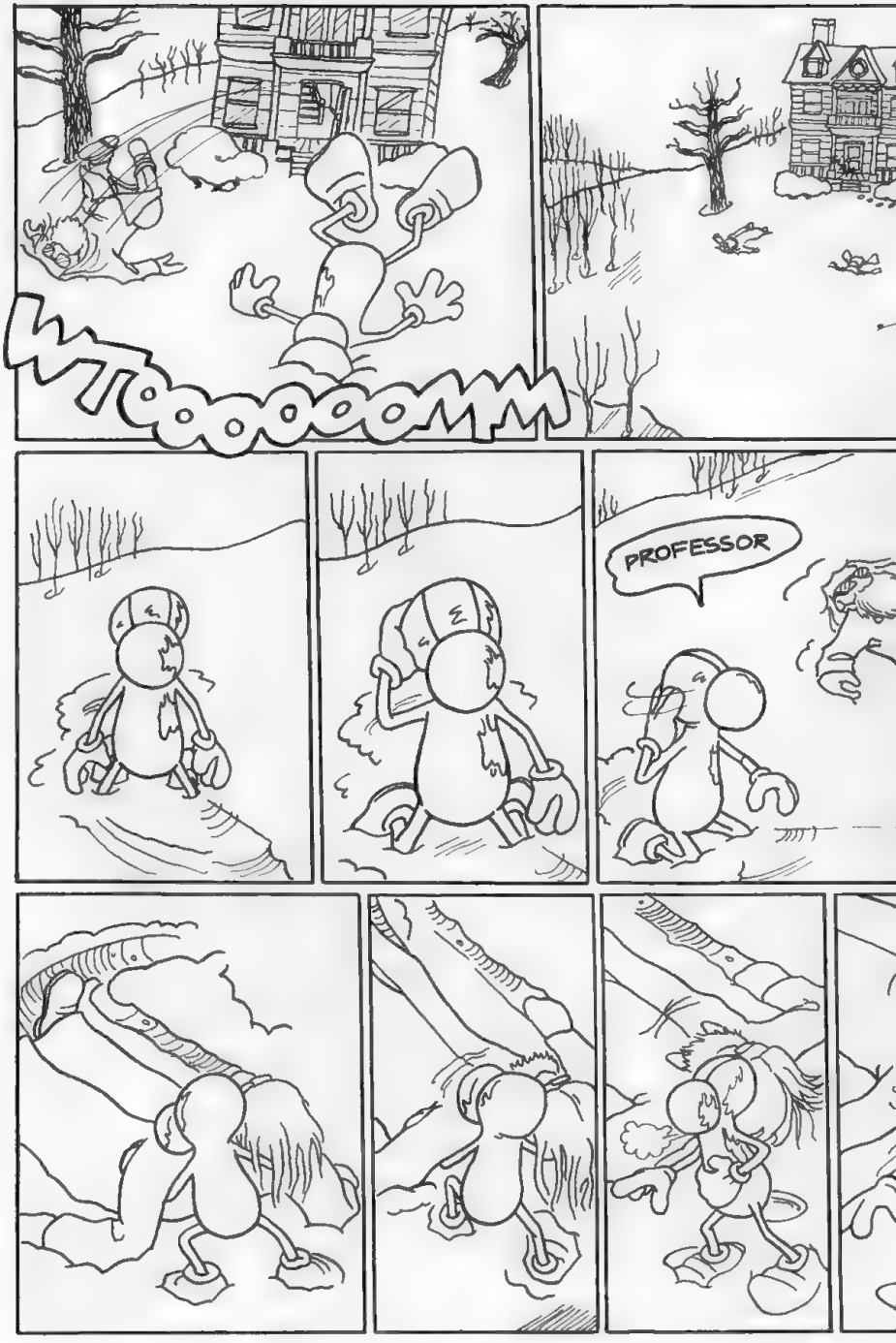
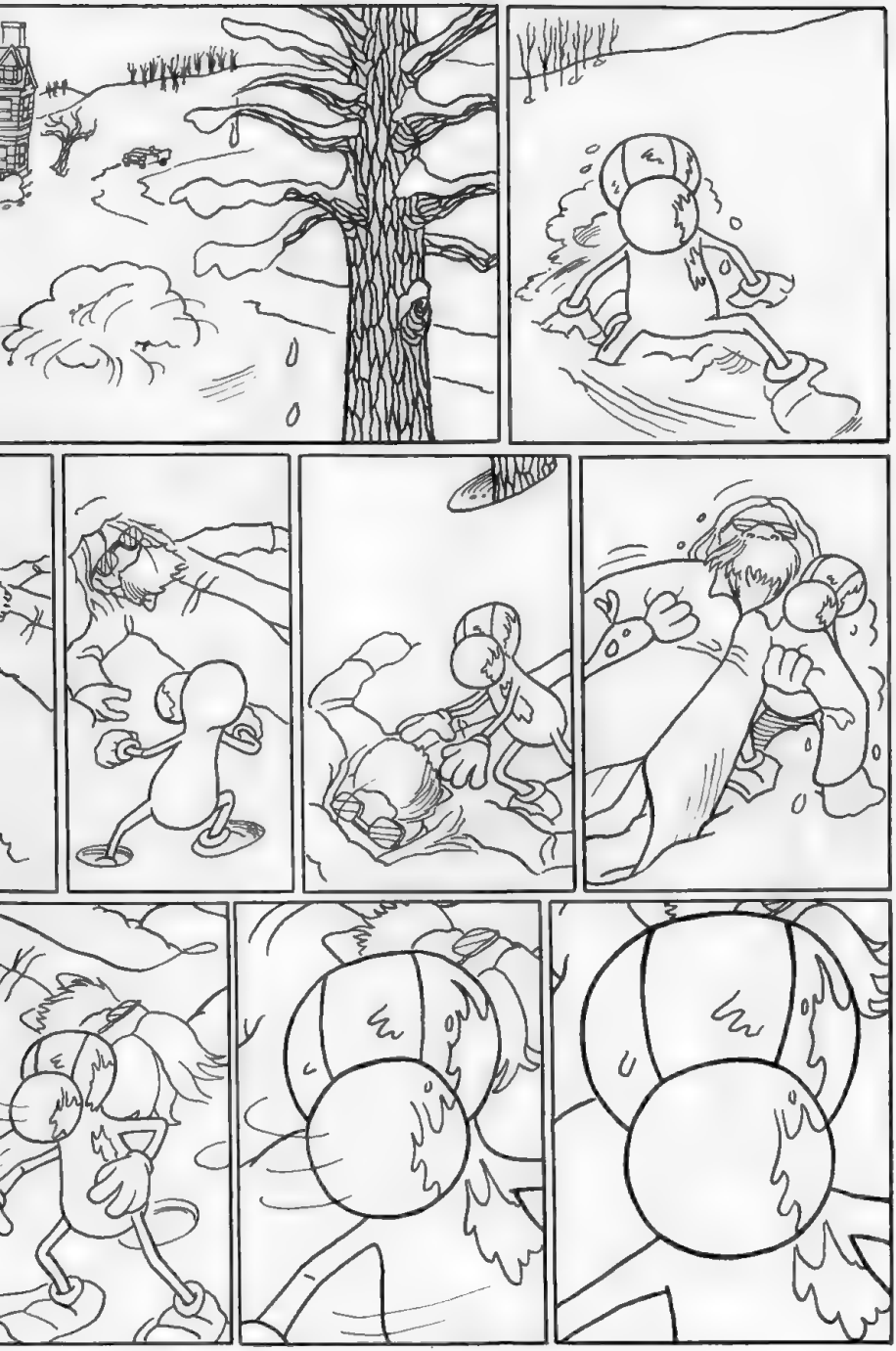
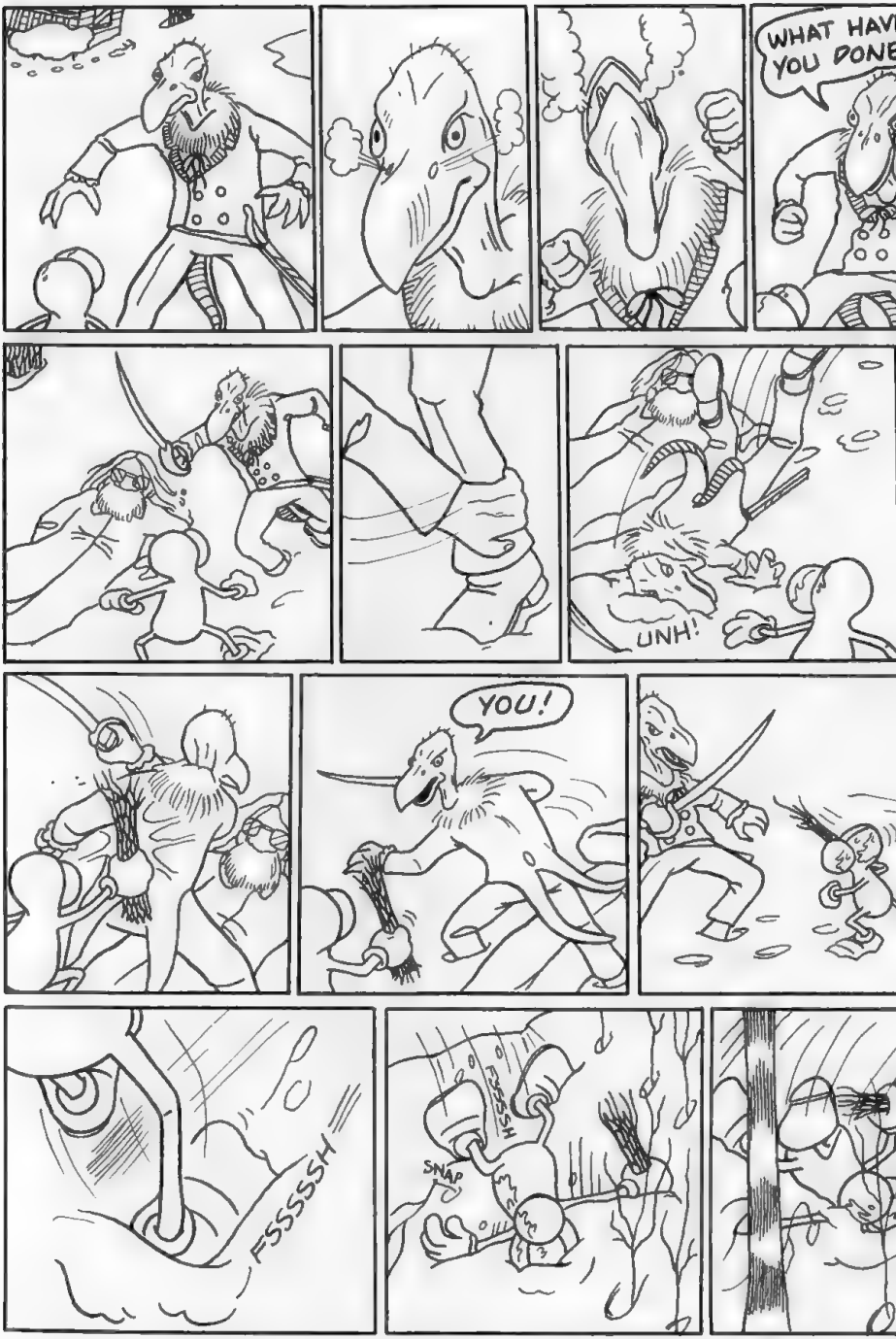
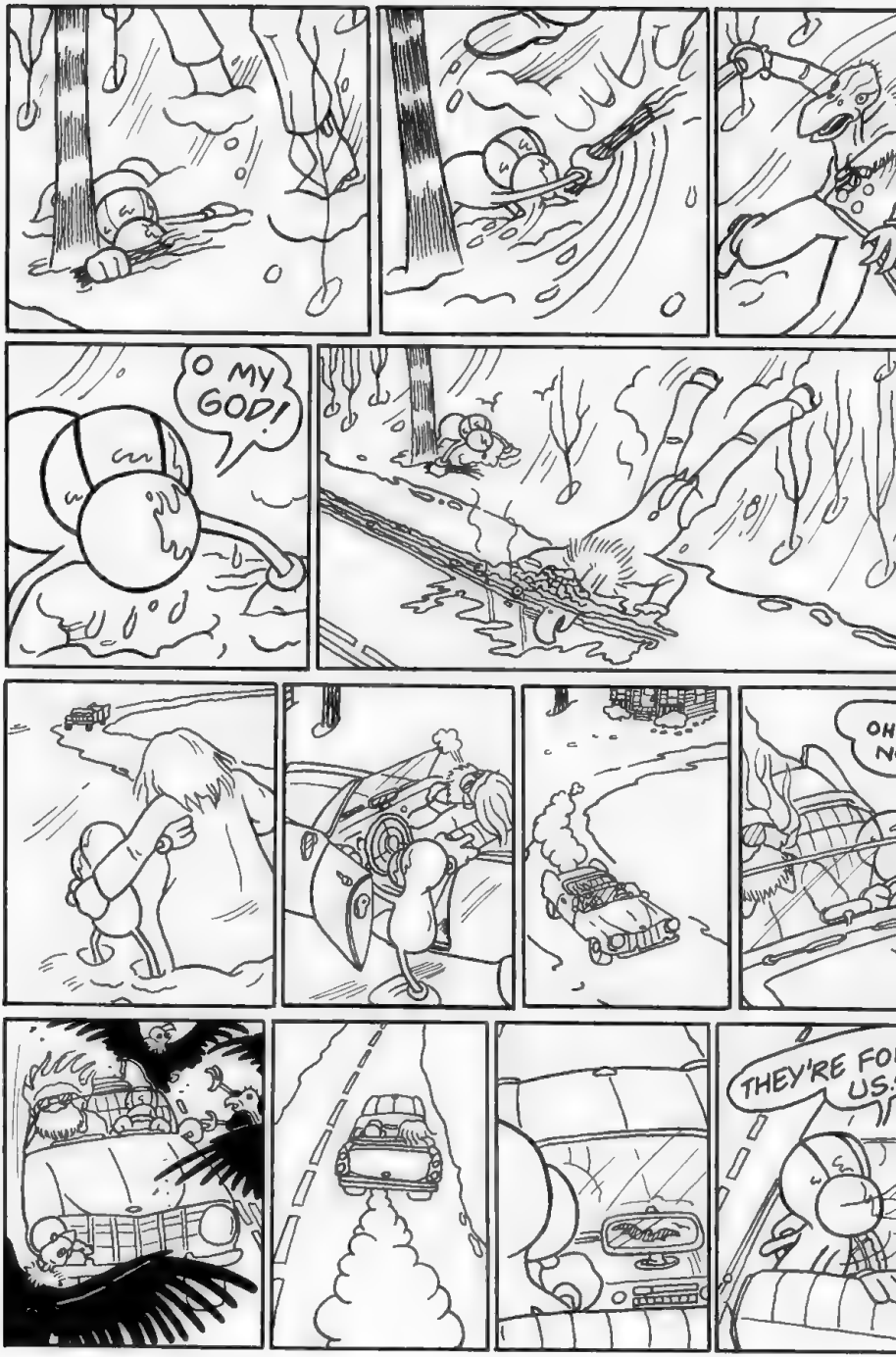
WE'VE GOT TO GET OU...


WTOOOOOOOMM
PROFESSOR




WHAT HAVE YOU DONE
UNH!
YOU!
FSSSSH
FSSSSH
SNAP

SHING
WRETCH!
CHOK!


O MY GOD!
THEY'RE FO
US

BOOOM
PFLUSHT
LOWIN'

ABOUT THIS ISSUE:

Briefly, there are just two things that I wish to make readers aware of before they continue on unhindered in their enjoyment of the balance of this publication:

1) If nothing else, I hope that we've provided a service to the Williamson and Crandall fans this time out. So far as we know (and that "we" includes Al himself), all of this issue's "Willi sketches" are being published for the first time. I'm especially proud to be able to run the large John Carter illustration from the early 50's. In a way, it typefies the consistent quality and illustrative excellence that have been Williamson's trademarks for three solid decades.

Around 1960, Reed Crandall produced approximately 4 weeks worth of samples for a proposed Jungle Jim syndicated newspaper strip. Archie Goodwin, just beginning a career in comics, furnished the text. Syndicates, at the time, were not interested, however, and work on the strip was suspended. As luck and "Fandom Lore" would have it, a wizened old prospector by the name of Tom Yeates uncovered this motherlode of vintage Crandall while blindly plumbing the unexplored vaults of the ancient and venerable Williamson Archives (formerly known as the Library at Alexandria). And so, thanks to the zealous efforts of Prof. Thomas "Where's my flashlight?" Yeates (actually, he tripped over it), we feature here, for the first time anywhere, the first installment of Reed Crandall's Jungle Jim. . . and a jungle gem it is! Part Two will be featured. . . in our NEXT issue!!

2) Unlike the vast bulk of publications from the "Golden Age of Fanzines" (late 60's — early 70's), or even the majority of today's semi-professional efforts, all contributors to this first issue of THIRD RAIL are being PAID for their work! Artists, typists, typesetters, letterers. . . everyone on down the ladder is being financially remunerated. . . with cold, hard CASH and not just "contributors' copies" of the magazine! That makes it DOUBLY important for YOU, the fan, to SUPPORT this magazine because, not only will you be directly supporting the CREATORS as opposed to merely some mercenary PUBLISHER (no applause, just throw money!), but you'll be giving people who wish to work in the comics medium a viable alternative, where they not only get a guaranteed page rate but also keep the copyrights on their work. . . AND receive a percentage of any net profit we happen to generate. Now, that's probably not a "New Deal", so far as co-op comix efforts go, but it is a "Fair Deal". . . and one that we hope to sustain throughout the duration of our ambitious publishing venture.

So remember, gang, it's POLITICALLY important for you to spend your dollars on US. . . because (1) US is, ultimately, YOU. . . and (2) the tombstone of this obscure fanzine publisher will someday read "It's ALL Politics". . . !

Citizen Ken

Reed Cranda

JUNG

INDIA! THE FOOT-HILLS OF THE HIMALAYAS. AROUND THE FUNERAL FIRE VILLAGERS OF GHAMOLI PRAY FOR A DEPARTED ONE AND FOR DELIVERANCE FROM THE MENACE THAT STALKS THEM DAILY!

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ll's

GLE JIM

IN CALCUTTA -- AN ECHO OF THE TIGER'S ROAR...
YOU DO NOT ENJOY THE PARTY, TUAN JIM... THE CABLE SPEAKS OF BAD THINGS?
BETTER PACK OUR GEAR, KOLU. WE'RE GOING TO THE NORTH COUNTRY. A FRIEND NEEDS OUR HELP.

AH! THE PLANE LANDS. I HOPE MRS. STEVES YOUR JUNGLE JIM IS THE ANSWER TO OUR PROBLEM.
ANSWERING PROBLEMS IS JIM BRADLEY'S SPECIALTY, KANDA SINGH!

JIM! I'M SO GLAD YOU'VE COME!
I CAME AS SOON AS I COULD GET A PLANE, ILENE. BUT WHERE'S BRIAN? I EXPECTED BOTH OF YOU WOULD BE HERE!

ER... BRIAN COULDN'T LEAVE THE PLANTATION. IT'S A LONG RIDE-- WE'D BEST GET STARTED.
BRIAN AND ILENE WERE ALWAYS CLOSE--FUNNY HE'D SEND HER OFF ALONE.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR TWELVE DEATHS RESTS HEAVILY ON OUR MR. STEVES. HE'S TRADED HIS RIFLE FOR A BOTTLE. BUT I'M RUDE-- CURT VON KALB AT YOUR SERVICE... I, TOO AM HERE TO HUNT THE TIGER.

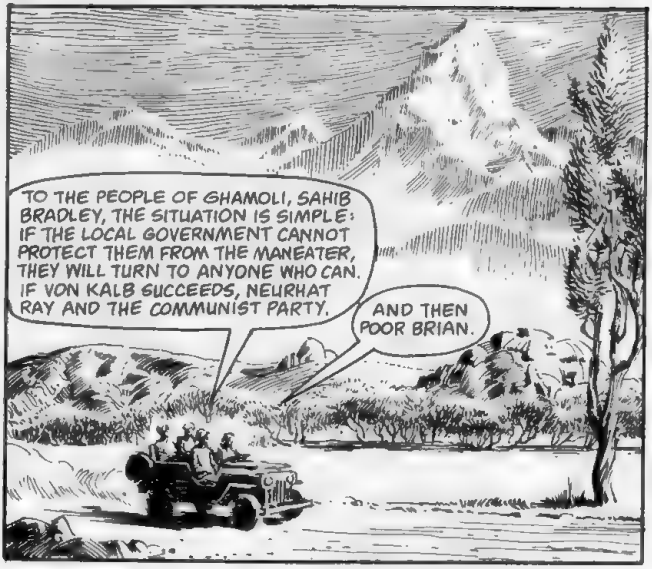
WHO IS THIS GUY, ILENE? WHAT'S HE TRYING TO SAY?
I DON'T MIND VIOLENCE, BRADLEY. BUT I LIKE TO CHOOSE MY TIME AND PLACE. THIS ISN'T EITHER.

JIM, THIS IS KANDA SINGH, MINISTER OF THE PROVINCE.
AH, JUNGLE JIM! I HAVE HEARD MUCH OF YOUR HUNTING PROWESS. SURELY YOU CAN KILL OUR TIGER!
TIGER?

A MANEATER! TWELVE PEOPLE FROM GHAMOLI HAVE BEEN KILLED!
BUT BRIAN IS AN EXPERT HUNTER-- WHY SHOULD HE NEED ME?
WHY SHOULD ANYONE NEED STEVES?

MY INTEREST IN THIS IS STRICTLY A SPORTING ONE. A CERTAIN CIVIC-MINDED GENTLEMAN, NEURHAT RAY, BY NAME, RETAINED ME TO KILL THE BEAST.
NEURHAT RAY! LEADER OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN OUR PROVINCE!

POLITICS! THIS IS BUSINESS. THE MAN-EATER IS HUNTED BEST ALONE. TWO HUNTERS AFTER THE SAME TIGER MIGHT PROVE INCONVENIENT, JUNGLE JIM!
ONE HUNTER COULD EASILY MAKE IT SO, FRIEND VON KALB.


TO THE PEOPLE OF GHAMOLI, SAHIB BRADLEY, THE SITUATION IS SIMPLE: IF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CANNOT PROTECT THEM FROM THE MANEATER, THEY WILL TURN TO ANYONE WHO CAN. IF VON KALB SUCCEEDS, NEURHAT RAY AND THE COMMUNIST PARTY,
AND THEN POOR BRIAN.

AHEAD IN GHAMOLI--

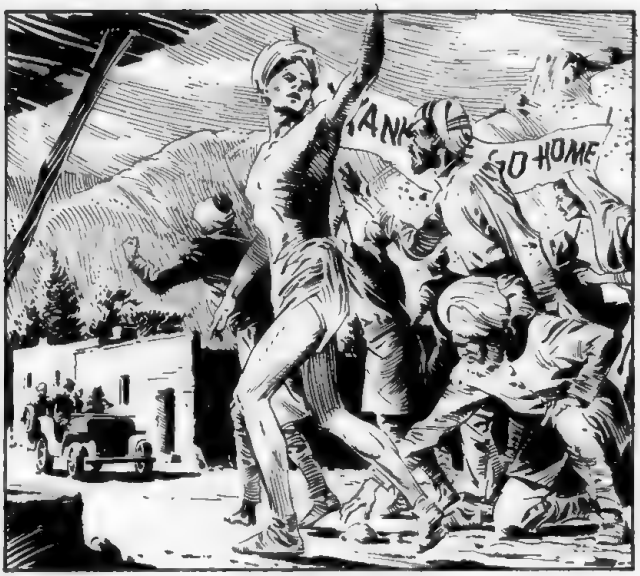
BRIAN WENT AFTER A TIGER THAT WAS PREYING ON VALLEY CATTLE-- BUT THE BEAST JUMPED HIM! THOUGH BADLY MAULED, HE WOUNDED IT. HE'S RECOVERED NOW, BUT BRIAN'S NOT THE SAME!
WOUNDED, UNABLE TO HUNT ITS NATURAL PREY, THE TIGER BECAME A MANEATER. INFLUENCED BY NEURHAT RAY, EVERYONE BLAMES SAHIB STEVENS.

BRIAN DOESN'T CARE TO REDEEM HIMSELF. HE JUST DRINKS TO FORGET THE TIGER.

SO! TIGER-HUNTING GUESTS! SUMMON THE PARTY MEMBERS. WE SHALL DEMONSTRATE OUR FEELING TOWARD MEDDLING FOREIGNERS.

ASIDE, DRUNKEN ONE! I HAVE URGENT BUSINESS.
DIDN'T USE TO TREAT OL' BRIAN STEVES THIS WAY! THINGS WERE DIFFERENT 'FORE THAT BLOODY TIGER!

H! GHAMOLI! YOU WILL SEE, AHIB BRADLEY, HOW FEAR HAS MADE OUR VILLAGE APPEAR DESERTED!


O HOME

UNDER ORDERS FROM THEIR LEADER NEURHAT RAY, THE COMMUNIST PARTY OF GHAMOLI GIVES A VIGOROUS DEMONSTRATION... THAT BEGINS TO GET OUT OF HAND!
FOREIGNERS GO HOME! LEAVE GHAMOLI!
KEEP BEHIND ME, ILENE! THESE BUGGERS MEAN BUSINESS!
MY PEOPLE-- THESE ARE YOUR FRIENDS! THIS MUST STOP!

I'VE GOT TO GET TO MY PISTOL IN THE JEEP!
RIOT! JIM AND HIS PARTY ARE AT THE MERCY OF THE COMMUNIST DEMONSTRATORS...
SUDDENLY, THE WAVE OF AT
WHAT TH--!
JIM--

KANDA SINGH!
BLAST IT! IF I COULD GET FREE FOR A SECOND, MY PISTOL'S BETWEEN THE SEATS IN THE JEEP!
A CHANCE-THROWN STONE FINDS ITS MARK, AND THE JEEP FORTRESS IS ABOUT TO BE OVERPOWERED--

TACKERS SUBSIDES...
OOK!

TIGER! AIIIII! THE MAN-KILLER!

KOLU--FLIP ME MY PISTOL--!
TAUN JIM--! THIS IS NO WEAPON FOR A TIGER!

--BUT IT'S THE ONLY ONE WE'VE GOT!
NO MATT YOU HUNT WHAT ON THEY CH

YOU CAN ALL GO HOME--WE'RE THROUGH WITH THE RIOT AND THE TIGER!
ITS BOLDNESS SHATTERED BY JIM'S GUNSHOTS, THE TIGER LEAVES GHAMOLI, AS SUDDENLY AS IT APPEARED--
ILENE--HOW'S KANDA SINGH?

THE STONE GAVE HIM AN AWFUL CUT, BUT HE'LL BE ALRIGHT.

ER HOW MANY TIGERS
, YOU NEVER KNOW
E'LL DO. AT TIMES
ARGE-- AND AT TIMES--

THEY RUN!

WE'LL ALL BE ALRIGHT NOW THAT BIG, BRAVE JUNGLE JIM'S HERE TO PROTECT US!

BRIAN--!
YOU'RE NO :HIC! COWARD LIKE OL' BRIAN! TIGERS DON'T SCARE JUNGLE JIM! DON'T LOOK SO SHOCKED I'M JUST DRUNK!

BRIAN, ILENE TOLD ME ABOUT YOU AND THE TIGER. IT COULD HAPPEN TO ANYONE. THIS DRINKING DOESN'T HELP.
IT HELPS, JIM. HELPS ME FORGET THE WHOLE BLOODY BUSINESS.
YOU DON'T FORGET, YOU FEEL SORRY FOR YOURSELF! YOU'LL GO RIGHT ON THAT WAY UNTIL YOU FIND OUT IF YOU CAN FACE THAT TIGER AGAIN!
A NOBLE, BUT HAZARDOUS THEORY!

IT'S PEACEFUL HERE ON THE PLANTATION, ILENE... MAKES IT HARD TO BELIEVE A MAN-EATER'S OUT PROWLING THE COUNTRYSIDE.
OH, JIM -- DO YOU THINK BRIAN WILL BE ABLE TO HUNT TOMORROW -- ?

MISSED YOUR SHOW WITH THE ER, BRADLEY, BUT I FIND THIS LMOST AS ENTERTAINING.
THE PICTURE OF THE DRUNKEN FOREIGNER FACING THE MAN-KILLER IS NOT WITHOUT HUMOR.
NONE THE LESS, TOMORROW BRIAN HUNTS THE TIGER WITH ME!

I'VE LOCKED UP HIS LIQUOR STOCK, SO TONIGHT WILL BE ROUGH ON HIM... BUT ONCE WE'RE ON THE TRACK OF THE CAT, I THINK HE'LL BEGIN TO FEEL LIKE THE OLD BRIAN.
LISTEN, TUAN JIM! THE TIGER ROARS! YOU CHEATED HIM OF A KILL TODAY. HE WILL HUNT EARLY TOMMORROW!